

Professional Development Plan for Students

This guide gives you a road map for making the transition from business student to business professional. Consult it often and work through the plan systematically. Remember that it is never too early to get started on professional development.

Your Freshman Year

As a first-year student, focus on creating good study habits, getting involved in campus events and organizations, and start learning about industries, companies and networking. These steps will help you achieve these objectives. Remember, it is never too early to get started on professional development.

Take core and general classes to help you explore your areas of interest. Consider choosing a double major or minor outside of your business major to broaden your experience. Use your first year to explore your major options.

Create good study habits. Begin by attending all of your classes, reading the material to be covered in class that day and taking notes. Determine the time of day you learn best (morning or evening) and let your friends know that this time is important. Search for a good place to study (the library, a quiet carousel in the Business Building) and make yourself follow through. If you are taking 12 credit hours, plan to spend at least twice that amount of time for reading and homework. The first year of college requires independent learning. You will need to schedule time to go to the library, computer and writing labs, meet with professors and study.

Introduce yourself to your faculty members. Ask questions, and visit their office during office hours. Developing rapport with your faculty members can make learning easier and encourage you to attend classes regularly. Advisors, faculty and staff can provide you with insights and understanding that could affect your choice of a major or pursuit of a career. They may also become a key part of your professional network.

Begin thinking about and acquiring practical work experience. The more professional experience you can acquire, the better your chances of being hired in your chosen field. Experience can be gained through summer jobs, campus employment, internships, co-operative experiences and volunteer activities.

Research the link between specific careers and majors. Some job positions require specific degrees. If you want to be an accountant, you need to major in accounting. If you want to be an investment analyst, you need to major in finance. If you are interested in one of these positions, majoring in the correct area is important to your success. But other positions may not require such specific training and you can major in many business disciplines and still be eligible for them. Set an appointment with a career counselor in the Center for Student Professional Development (BB 2.01.08) to learn more about how careers and majors are related.

Learn how to use on-campus resources to find and apply for an internship or co-op. Learn how to use Rowdy Jobs and the *COB Recruiter*, the college's recruitment newsletter, to search for desirable positions. For instructions or assistance with either of these resources, come by the Center for Student Professional Development (BB 2.01.08) or log on to [Rowdy Jobs](#).

Get involved! Start your personal and professional development by becoming an active member of the UTSA community. Choose from more than 20 business affiliated student organizations or from over 200 student organizations on-campus. At the beginning of each semester, University-wide and College of Business Involvement Fairs are held to help you select organizations that are best for your personality, career ambitions and social interests. Community service, on-campus jobs, and clubs and organizations can help you to build your Roadrunner network, contribute to the community, and develop the leadership, communication and teamwork skills that employers seek.

Begin networking through student clubs and College of Business events. Learn about opportunities by meeting alumni and corporate friends of UTSA as a member of a student group. It's never too early to start building your business network.

Begin preparing your résumé and cover letter. Attend Résumé Writing Workshops and meet with a Career Counselor to get started. With a polished résumé you'll be prepared for opportunities when they come along. Stop by the Center for Student Professional Development to take advantage of our library and printed resources or to set an

appointment with a career counselor to get started.

Go to job fairs and other career events. Attending these events can introduce you to companies who recruit UTSA College of Business students. All students are encouraged to research employers of interest and speak with company representatives. By simply speaking with recruiters and other members of corporate teams, you can learn more about the kind of skills an employer is looking for. This information can make you more competitive when seeking internships and co-ops as well as full-time opportunities in the future.

Your Sophomore Year

In your sophomore year you will be taking more business courses and you will have more opportunities to meet with business professionals and learn about various industries. Take advantage of the resources and events available to you in this exciting and critical time in your professional development.

Check your academic progress with an academic advisor. If you haven't already met with your academic advisor to set up your degree plan, do so right away.

Develop relationships with advisors, faculty, and staff. Introduce yourself to your professors, ask questions, and visit their office during office hours. At some point, you will need a recommendation letter from a faculty member. Advisors, faculty and staff can provide you with insights and understanding that could affect your choice of a major or pursuit of a career. They may also become a key part of your professional network.

Continue exploring your interests through courses and activities. Speak to your academic advisor about how to customize your degree with a minor. Use elective hours to take courses in areas where you might have a special interest. Advising Centers are found at both the Main Campus (BB 2.02.04) and the Downtown Campus (BV 1.304). To set up an appointment with an academic advisor at the Main Campus, call (210) 458-4562. If you desire an appointment with an academic advisor at the Downtown Campus, call (210) 458-2550.

Seek leadership opportunities. You can gain valuable leadership skills that employers seek in job candidates. Participate as a volunteer. Join a campus group or sports team.

Write or update your résumé! Pick up a copy of our official College of Business résumé template at the center. Better yet, download the [template](#). The template will help you achieve a professional "look" quickly and guide you on the kind of information you will want to include on your résumé. Then come by BB 2.01.08 or call (210) 458-4039 to set up an appointment with one of our Career Counselors to review your résumé.

Attend Center for Student Professional Development and University Career Center programs. Learn about career and industry-related topics. Workshop topics include Résumé Writing, Interview Skills, Career Fair Pointers, Etiquette, and Finding an Internship. Additionally, the Frost Lecture series can create opportunities to make great contacts with corporate executives.

Attend the Sophomore Leadership Retreat. This overnight event, created specifically for sophomores, will help you to understand yourself as a leader. You will gain valuable communication and teamwork skills and have an opportunity to evaluate your progress and goals.

Go to career fairs! Career Fairs are held during both the fall and spring semesters. Even if you aren't currently seeking employment or an internship, attendance at these events can be very helpful in expanding your network and can help you to research potential companies for future employment.

Explore work experiences, including internships and co-ops. Professional work experiences are highly valued by employers. To gain these experiences, you must begin applying early in your college career. Finding a non-credit internship as a sophomore can be very beneficial to your job search in later years.

Continue to use the Center for Student Professional Development and Rowdy Jobs to search for viable internship and job opportunities. Understanding how to use both of these valuable resources can help you to find the best opportunities for your specific goals. You can obtain additional materials about using these systems in the Center for Student Professional Development (BB 2.01.08).

Broaden your business knowledge. Read business publications such as *BusinessWeek* or the *Wall Street Journal*.

Consider Studying Abroad. The College of Business offers semester-long and short "immersion" experiences to expose students to international business. An immersion experience is a for-credit course offered in the summer and led by a faculty member. Trips last typically 8 to 15 days. Students apply to the program and, once accepted, register for the course. Funding is available to help defray the cost of travel. Immersion trips are offered to: Brazil and Spain. Plan early. Students may also do a traditional study abroad program for a full semester. Check with the office of [International Relations Programs](#) or join the Global Business Club globalbusinessutsa@gmail.com.

Apply to participate in the Leadership Challenge. This year-long leadership program is open to juniors and seniors with at least a 3.0 GPA. Participants meet with business leaders and engage in unique service projects while exploring the challenges of leadership. Contact the Center for Professional Excellence at (210) 458-4874 for more information.

Your Junior Year

During their junior year, students become eligible for a large number of internships. The process to gaining an internship or co-op opportunity can be very lengthy. Thus, persistence, research and refining job search documents are of the utmost importance.

First Semester

- **Meet with your Academic Advisor.** By doing so, you can be sure that you are on the fast track to graduation. Meeting with your advisor periodically can prevent you from taking unneeded classes, and help you monitor your grade point average.
- **Prepare for on-Campus interviews.** In order to interview with any company that comes on campus to recruit students for full-time positions, students must meet a basic level of preparedness. This can be completed in one of four ways. (1) Complete the in-class portion of the H-E-B CAP. Any student who has participated in the Career Action Program through Dr. Wilson's MGT 3003 meets the basic level of preparedness. (2) Attend the on-campus certification offered by the Career Center. Check Rowdy Jobs for workshop schedule. (3) Complete a mock interview with a career counselor in the CSPD. (4) Complete an online training module (Interviewing 101) relating to interview techniques. This final option is only available to students who learn about interviewing opportunities at the last minute. Further details on how to complete this requirement are available at the Center for Student Professional Development (CSPD).
- **Understand your strengths** and identify areas for improvement. Make a list of professional skills and how you can acquire or further develop these skills. Practice articulating your strengths and limitations so that in an interview you are able to feel comfortable with talking about yourself.
- **Update your résumé and cover letter.** Update and review your [résumé](#) and [cover letter](#) making sure to use the COB templates. If you have specific questions, schedule an appointment to see a College of Business Career Counselor to review your drafts and prepare your job search documents for a variety of positions.
- **Explore internship and co-op options early.** Deadlines for summer internships with large employers can be as early as November of the preceding year. Look for internship possibilities in the *COB Recruiter*, Rowdy Jobs or via employers' Web sites to learn about the requirements and deadlines.
- **Use Rowdy Jobs and the *Recruiter*** to find internship and co-op opportunities. Understand how to use the online Rowdy Jobs system and the [COB Recruiter](#), which is available weekly or at the Center for Student Professional Development or on our Web site, or via e-mail. Join our distribution list by sending an e-mail to: [Hildi Mayorga](#). Any questions about use of these resources can be directed to the CSPD (BB 2.01.08).
- **Meet employers** at Career Fairs, On-Campus Recruiting Tables, and through employer events like information sessions and receptions. Do research on your targeted companies, industries, and opportunities.
- **Expand your professional network** through clubs, professional organizations, family, friends, other students, faculty, and staff. Tell your friends and colleagues about the kinds of positions you seek.
- **Enroll in the H-E-B Career Action Program (CAP).** The H-E-B CAP is a 6-12 hour certification program in professional development. Students have the option of enrolling in CAP when they enroll in MGT 3003 with Dr. Bennie Wilson. This program helps students prepare their résumé and elevator speech. Students also work on interviewing and networking skills with area employers. Details about how to participate in this program can be found in the CSPD.
- **Consider an International Experience.** If you haven't completed an immersion program or semester-long study abroad but would like to, the fall is the best time to gather all of the necessary information and

approvals. Meet with the COB Office of International Relations. Then meet with your academic advisor to see how the experience will fit in your degree plans. If you're unsure where to start come talk to us in the Center for Student Professional Development.

Winter Break and Second Semester

- **Read the *COB Recruiter*.** Many positions are posted during winter break. Stay informed and apply to those opportunities that interest you. Follow up on applications.
- **Stay positive.** Maintain a positive attitude and be flexible and realistic. The internship/co-op search can take time. Have at least one focus area, but pursue alternatives.
- **Revisit career resources.** Use search engines, Web sites, publications, trade journals, professional associations, and directories. Many of these are available on campus through the John Peace Library, and the Center for Student Professional Development.
- **Refine interview skills** through individual coaching and practice interviews with College of Business Career Counselors.
- **Network with College of Business seniors** to learn about possible internships/co-ops and contacts. Remember that people you meet at UTSA may help you get a job in the future.
- **Apply to participate in the Leadership Challenge.** This year-long leadership program is open to juniors and seniors with at least a 3.0 GPA. Participants meet with business leaders and engage in unique service projects while exploring the challenges of leadership. Contact the Center for Professional Excellence at (210) 458-4874 for more information.

Your Senior Year

The senior year is a crucial time in the job search process. You don't have to look for a job by yourself. The Center for Student Professional Development can help. Meet with your College of Business Career Counselor in early September to get started. Landing a professional-level job can be challenging; but with persistence, it can be done.

Fall Semester

Visit your Academic Advisor. Your academic advisor can help you be sure you are moving swiftly toward graduation. Your advisor can help you if you have not applied for graduation or your capstone seminars. Knowing your academic advisor personally can help when questions arise toward the end of your senior year.

Prepare for your job interviews. See materials on this Web site for common interview questions and review them thoroughly. Schedule a one-on-one mock interview with a career counselor or attend an interview workshops. Career counselors will be able to help you identify which questions you might be asked and can give you tips on how to answer questions in a natural, intelligent way.

Continue to refine résumé and cover letter. Visiting a Career Counselor can help you to write a résumé designed to carry you from college to corporate life. If you do not have a clear, concise and usable résumé, visit the Center for Student Professional Development (CSPD) to get advice on [résumé](#) and [cover letter](#) writing.

Participate in information sessions sponsored by companies who are recruiting. You'll expand your network and also you learn whether the company is a fit with your personality and goals.

Attend workshops like Résumé Writing, Interview Preparation to help you become as polished as possible.

Ensure that you are receiving career-related e-mails from the College of Business and the University Career Center. Sign up to receive a copy of the *COB Recruiter* by e-mail and update your profile in Rowdy Jobs so that you can receive the latest updates.

Identify a list of job opportunities you may want to pursue. By doing so, you will give yourself a goal. Companies and job types can always be added or subtracted. Keeping track of these options can help you to set realistic goals about finding a job and can help you to fully understand what you are searching for in a full-time permanent position.

Know that not all good career opportunities are part of on-campus interviewing or the Rowdy Jobs system. Many companies post positions only on their Web site. Both H-E-B and Medtronics post their positions on their Web site and usually do not post on university Web sites. Visit with a Career Counselor for additional options. It's best to expand your search to Web sites for a location where you might want to move and to Web sites for specific industries that interest you.

Apply for job opportunities of interest through Rowdy Jobs and by searching through the *COB Recruiter*.

Prepare for follow-up interviews. Most professional jobs will require a second or third interview. Some will require more. What makes the second interview different from the first? Should you know more about the company than you knew in the first interview? How can you prepare for the second interview? Career counselors can assist you in answering these questions. Make an appointment at the CSPD.

Learn how to manage decisions about and negotiate job offers. Career counselors can help you to negotiate timelines, benefits and compensation packages for job offers. See our guide to [negotiation](#).

REMEMBER: Accepting a job offer is a serious commitment and "yes" means yes. DO NOT accept a job and then continue looking for another opportunity.

Spring Semester

Attend the University-wide Career Fair in the spring. Another opportunity to meet employers can always help in the job search. Unless you have accepted an offer, attending the Spring Career Fair is highly important so you can

network with those who can offer you employment.

If you are still looking for employment, use job search tactics employed in the Fall Semester. Not everyone will have secured a job early in the school year. Thus, it is important for job-seekers to continue with the processes of refining their résumé, cover letter, interview skills, and reading the *Recruiter* each week to find opportunities suitable to their ambitions. Remember that persistence is the key to finding a permanent position and that it is important to stay positive about the process.